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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: Kuwait March 22, 2006

Major Issues

-- Sectarianism and forming a government in Iraq
-- U.S. Dialogue with Iran

Block Quotes

-- On March 20, 2006 Al-Qabas, a daily independent and pro-U.S. newspaper, published an Op-Ed by former Minister of Education, and political activist Dr. Ahmed Al-Rubae where he suggested forming a temporary government in Iraq from a group of technocrats that are capable of running the various ministries. "There is no reason for not forming a capable temporary government in Iraq from a group of qualified independent technocrats who can run the show. Obsession with authority and political power amongst the leaders of ethnic groups and the various political factions in Iraq is the problem. Iraqis have paid a hefty price for their promised democracy. Iraqis have the right to live a normal life after all that they have suffered. I wonder if the politicians and the leaders of ethnic groups would listen and put the interest of their country and people before their personal interests," wrote Dr. Al-Rubae.

-- Also in Al-Qabas on the same day, and under the headline "Exchanging Smiles with the Enemy," Dr. Abdul Mohsen Yousuf Jamal described the proposed U.S. dialogue with Iran as an exchange of smirks between enemies. "Four months have passed since the Iraqi parliamentary elections, and there is no government formation in the horizon... The U.S. Administration has attempted to impose its political agenda on the various parties, but it faced many obstacles from Moscow, Beijing, and the traditional Persian stubbornness. That is why as the U.S. Secretary of State put it 'the U.S. has decided to sit down with America's oldest enemy.' The Iranians also realized that talks through the Russian and Chinese channels would not be fruitful in resolving the crisis. That is why Tehran accepted sitting down with the enemy to talk about the future of their neighbours. The success of these discussions is vital. However, their failure will demolish any hope for the already dismal situation," wrote Dr. Jamal.

-- March 20, 2006: Al-Rai Al-Aam, a daily political independent newspaper, published an Op-Ed by former president of American University in Kuwait Dr. Shafiq Ghabra under the headline, "The American-Iranian Dialogue, and Iraq." In his conclusion, Dr. Ghabra said, "The U.S.-Iran strife is likely to get worse and that is because of the nature of U.S. policies in the Middle East region. The nature of the political regime in Iran and those who are in power also do not make things any easier. Iraq will remain a stage

for military operations and terrorist attacks for a long time because of the sharp conflicts amongst the different rivalries."

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